

REGIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY WORK PLAN

COUNTY OF INYO

I. INTRODUCTION

Inyo County is a large County (10,207 square miles – the second largest County in California) with a small rural population (approximately 18,000). The population has remained static since 1990 given growth constraints created by the large amount of public land in the County. Only approximately 1.7% of the County is in private ownership.

II. INFRASTRUCTURE

A. ALLOCATION OF STIMULUS FUNDS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (LTC) will be the regional agency that will allocate transportation funds made immediately available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

1. The criteria and methods that were applied in the selection of local streets and roads projects to be funded.

ANSWER: The nature of the funding and the constraints inherent in federal funding sources (only applicable to Federal Aid Routes) and the “shovel ready” requirements shaped the selection of the projects. Caltrans District 9 staff, in coordination with LTC, requested that each local agency identify and rank potential qualifying projects that were consistent with two separate funding scenarios.

The following selection process were used by the City and County:

- a. Federal Aid Route status
- b. Inclusion in the Draft Regional Transportation Plan
- c. Pavement Condition
- d. Average Daily Traffic
- e. Feasibility of meeting “shovel ready” timeline requirements. Projects, and project segments were excluded because of:
 - i. Environmental constraints
 - ii. Engineering constraints
 - iii. AASHTO Compliance / Design Exception issues
 - iv. Physiographic considerations
 - v. Seasonal construction constraints (especially with projects above the winter snowline that have short construction seasons)
- f. Feasibility of applying funding to street and road projects currently programmed in the STIP (There is only one project programmed on City or County facilities that meets this requirement. The hurried timeline makes timely delivery of this project difficult.

Basically, the County and City identified qualifying new projects in areas slated for future pavement rehabilitation that could be completed within the timeframe that would have the least impediments to timely delivery.

Once those priority lists were received, the LTC adopted a ranking of the projects in a way to meet the needs of both agencies. After careful consideration, the City withdrew their requests for local streets and roads funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

As of the date of submittal for this FTIP amendment request, the amount of funding available is uncertain. Hence, the scope of the projects will vary in accordance with what the actual funding amount is.

2. How the needs and opportunities presented by local agency projects will be addressed.

ANSWER: Inyo County is a large County (10,207 square miles – the second largest County in California) with a small rural population (approximately 18,000). The population has remained static since 1990 given growth constraints created by the large amount of public land in the County. Only approximately 1.7% of the County is in private ownership. Given the small population of the County and large land area, maintenance of existing roadways is a primary concern. The selected projects will assist the County in system maintenance.

Portions of the roadways selected may qualify for funding under grant programs administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The roadwork on the non-USFS portions of the roadway may help leverage future funding on the upper portions of Whitney Portal and Onion Valley Roads.

3. Any strategies or specific steps that will be taken to minimize or overcome regulatory or operational barriers that may impede the timely and effective investment of stimulus funds. For example, strategies or steps to streamline procurement procedures, ensure appropriate small business participation and achieve efficiencies in processing permits prior to or during construction of projects.

ANSWER: The primary focus of City and County staff has been to identify eligible projects within a fluid and un-fixed project nomination environment. At this point, emphasis has been placed on avoiding potential regulatory issues that would affect project delivery. The roadways selected meet the criteria as it is now understood.

4. The methods that will be used to comply with applicable transparency and accountability requirements.

ANSWER: The standard operating procedures used by the County in the administration of local streets and roads projects under each specific funding stream will meet these requirements, as they are now understood. The County will submit a quarterly update to the LTC on the status of ARRA funded projects. County and City projects will comply with transparency and accountability requirements as they are developed and implemented.

B. ALLOCATION OF STIMULUS FUNDS FOR OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors will be the regional agency that will allocate funds made immediately available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

1. The criteria and methods that will be applied in selecting projects to be funded administered by the regional agency or agencies.

ANSWER: Projects that fit within the “shovel ready” and “completion deadline” criteria and demonstrate readiness and ability to utilize stimulus funds quickly and effectively will be considered priority projects. These proposed projects will fulfill the Economic Recovery Program mission of leveraging resources, expediting infrastructure delivery, supporting the growth of business and innovation, developing the California workforce and will enhance the environmental quality. All projects will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for review, prioritization and direction.

2. How the needs and opportunities presented by local agency projects will be addressed.

ANSWER: The needs and opportunities presented in the projects listed in Exhibit B will be addressed on an individual basis. The County of Inyo is a large geographical area (10,207 square miles) with many miles between communities and services. The needs are specific for each area, and the projects reflect this issue.

The Tecopa Sewage Pond Project is an Environmental Stewardship project that is of great importance and urgency to enhance the environmental quality surrounding the area. If the sewer ponds were to be shut down, the residents in the surrounding small community as well as the campground and park, public library and community center would all be hugely impacted by the closure. The Tecopa area is visited heavily by recreationists that come to enjoy the soothing bath houses and the dry desert climate. The closest town that can accommodate sewage pumping is Pahrump, which is 35 miles away, and even then, the vendor from Pahrump has shown hesitancy crossing the Nevada border into California to provide the services. The fees for the out of state pumping services would be expensive. A majority of the residents in the Tecopa community are on extremely fixed incomes. The suspension of Prop. 40 funds has pushed this project back until a source of revenue can be obtained to complete the reconstruction of the ponds.

Both of the Renewable Energy projects offer the County an opportunity to streamline overhead costs while producing environmental benefits by reducing greenhouse gases. There is also the potential for near-term job creation which can boost the California workforce and add economic stability in Inyo County.

3. Any strategies or specific steps that will be taken to minimize or overcome regulatory or operational barriers that may impede the timely and effective investment of stimulus funds. For example, strategies or steps to streamline procurement procedures, ensure appropriate small business participation and achieve efficiencies in processing permits prior to or during construction of projects.

ANSWER: The primary focus of County staff has been to identify eligible projects within a fluid and un-fixed project nomination environment. At this point, emphasis has been placed on avoiding potential regulatory issues that would affect project delivery.

4. The methods that will be used to comply with applicable transparency and accountability requirements.

ANSWER: The standard operating and accounting procedures used by the County in the administration of funding streams will meet these requirements. The County will comply with transparency and accountability requirements as they are developed and implemented.

C. INFRASTRUCTURE POTENTIALLY SHOVEL-READY WITHIN TWO YEARS

SEE EXHIBIT C

EXHIBIT A

1. FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (FTIP) AMENDMENT

The California Transportation Commission has estimated that from \$5.866 to \$8.722 million will be available to Inyo County. The project scope will not be fixed until the monetary amount available is established.

I. INYO COUNTY PROJECTS

Inyo County has requested programming for two projects totaling from \$5.866 to \$8.722 million. The requested projects are described below:

Whitney Portal Road Rehabilitation Project: The proposed project will resurface or reconstruct a portion of Whitney Portal Road. The project scope will vary depending on the amount of funding available.

Onion Valley Road Rehabilitation Project: The proposed project will resurface or reconstruct a portion of Onion Valley Road. The project scope will vary depending on the amount of funding available.

2. FEDERAL STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (FSTIP) AMENDMENT

The California Transportation Commission preliminarily estimated that \$374,955 would be available to Inyo County. The first FSTIP amendment was submitted in February 2009. The monetary amount available under the Surface Transportation Program (STP) has changed significantly since Inyo LTC staff submitted the first FSTIP amendment request. There is now estimated to be \$955,729 to be available to Inyo County. Inyo County will submit an FSTIP amendment to reflect the changed estimate.

II. INYO COUNTY PROJECTS

North Barlow Lane/Dixon Lane Rehabilitation Project: The project scope will vary depending on the amount of funding available. Barlow Lane from the intersection with US 395 or North Sierra Highway on the south to where it merges with Saniger Lane just north of Bar M Lane. Rehabilitate approximately 0.5 miles of Barlow Lane and install traffic striping, pavement marking, and striping and signage for existing bike lanes. The project cost will be \$458,000.

Miscellaneous Guardrail Construction and Rehabilitation: The proposed project will resurface or reconstruct a portion of Onion Valley Road. The project scope will vary depending on the amount of funding available.

III. CITY OF BISHOP PROJECTS

Hanby Lane: The project scope will vary depending on the amount of funding available. The City of Bishop has not determined if they will proceed with this project due to

workload, environmental constraints, and AASHTO compliance concerns. Estimated cost is \$340,000.

3. TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

There is \$550,000 in TE capacity available for programming. The County and the City were unable to develop new projects. The LTC had planned to program the Eastern California Virtual Transportation Museum with funds programmed in the RTIP in the TE reserve. The state did not program this funds in the STIP. This carryover project is now ready to proceed. The State has one project that they are ready to proceed with. The two projects are programmed in excess of the amount that is estimated to be available to Inyo County. The projects are described below:

IV. INYO COUNTY PROJECT

Eastern California Virtual Transportation Museum: The proposed project will scan historic transportation-related photographs at the Eastern California Museum. The photographs will be made available to the public and an exhibit focusing on the transportation history of Eastern California will be created. \$61,500 has been programmed for the completion of this project.

V. STATE of CALIFORNIA PROJECT

Father Crowley Vista Point Enhancement: This State project will pave a historic lookout point along State Route 190 in Death Valley National Park. The estimated project cost is \$834,000.

4. ALTERNATIVE FSTIP PROGRAMMING

There is currently legislation in the State Assembly that would change the distribution formula from the State to local jurisdictions. The amount of funding that would be available to Inyo County under this scenario is uncertain, but estimated to be \$1.9 million. Under this funding scenario, the City of Bishop has tentatively decided not to proceed with any projects due to workload, environmental constraints, and AASHTO compliance concerns.

VI. INYO COUNTY PROJECTS

North Barlow Lane/Dixon Lane Rehabilitation Project: The project scope will vary depending on the amount of funding available. Barlow Lane from the intersection with US 395 or North Sierra Highway on the south to where it merges with Saniger Lane just north of Bar M Lane. Rehabilitate approximately 0.5 miles of Barlow Lane and install traffic striping, pavement marking, and striping and signage for existing bike lanes. The project cost will be \$458,000.

Whitney Portal Road Rehabilitation Project: The proposed project will resurface or reconstruct a portion of Whitney Portal Road. The project scope will vary depending on the amount of funding available.

EXHIBIT B

1. ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECT – COUNTYWIDE FACILITIES

Description of the Project

This project will include the following scope of work:

- Install 128 kW DC solar shade structure at vacant Courthouse lot.
- Install 225 kW DC ground mounted tracking solar system at the Jail Complex.
- Install 70-ton highly energy efficient chiller, having Turbocor compressors, and fan coil units to provide cooling for the entire Courthouse.
- Install fifteen (15) high efficiency rooftop packaged cooling only units having a total capacity of 87 tons.
- Upgrade the existing energy management system (EMS) and recommission the entire HVAC system to save energy.
- Install energy efficient building lighting at the Jail, Courthouse and all other County buildings.
- Install programmable thermostats for all the packaged air conditioning units throughout the County to save energy and extend equipment life.
- Install ozone laundry system to save water and energy.
- Install a computer based plumbing control system that includes electronic control valves on toilets, controllers and computer to save water.
- Replace 1,002 existing water meters with meters with AMR capability to save water.
- Install three (3) SolarBee solar powered reservoir circulators in Diaz Lake and one (1) in Millpond Lake to reduce algae and improve water quality.

Job Creation

According to our estimate, this project will create 198 new skilled jobs, mainly in the mechanical and electrical trades.

Shovel Ready

This project will be ready for implementation within 90 days of the funding being made available. The project will take no more than 9 months to complete.

Environmental Benefits

Following are the environmental benefits of this project:

- 1,000 tons/year of greenhouse gases (CO₂) avoided
- Equivalent to preserving 6 acres/year of forest from deforestation
- Equivalent to removing 165 cars/year off the highways

2. RENEWABLE ENERGY & ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECT-JUVENILE CENTER

Description of the Project

This project will include the following scope of work:

- Install 75 kW DC solar, photovoltaic system, on the roof of the Juvenile Center in Independence.
- The system will be able to provide 75% of the facility's electricity, on average, over the course of a year.

Job Creation

According to our estimate, this project will create 5 new skilled jobs, mainly in the renewable energy trade.

Shovel Ready

This project will be ready for implementation within 90 days of the funding being made available. The project will take no more than 6 months to complete.

Environmental Benefits

Following are the environmental benefits of this project over a 25-year system life:

- 2,409 tons of greenhouse gases (CO₂) avoided
- Equivalent to 4,818,000 auto miles

3. AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT/RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM-TECOPA SEWAGE POND REPAIR

Project Description:

The Tecopa sewer pond is located on the west side of the Tecopa Hot Springs Park and Campground in Tecopa, California, (**Inyo County**). The Park and Campground is comprised of approximately 40 acres on land that is leased by Inyo County from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Park and Campground facility is operated by Inyo County Parks and Recreation on a permit issued by the BLM. In addition to the campground and sewer pond, the facility also contains a playground area, two bathhouses, four Park and Campground restrooms, the town Library, a Community Center, and various other buildings, which discharge waste to the sewer pond. The small residential community also relies on the sewage pond for the pumping and disposal of residential septage.

The 350-foot wide by 550-foot long sewer pond, which was built in 1969, comprises approximately 2.5 acres, and is surrounded by 12- to 13-foot high earthen embankments on the north and west sides. The unlined pond is approximately 11 feet deep, has no surface outlet, and functions as an infiltration and evaporation pond. The maximum design capacity of the pond is 40,000 gallons per day. The winter and summer peak flows are 14,000 and 1,500 gallons per day, respectively. The average winter flow ranges from 8,000 to 1,500 gallons per day.

Issue

An approximately 160-foot long section of the west embankment has shown indications of leakage that were initially observed in April 2001. The seepage, which can create standing surface water, appears to stop during periods of low usage. A tracer dye test indicated that the sewer pond contents are the source of seepage. The burrowing of animals may also contribute to or cause the seepage of the pond contents through the embankment.

The seepage is traveling into an area of critical environmental concern and impacting two endangered species identified as the Tecopa Vole and the Knightwort plant.

Project Approach

The County's basic approach to repair of the pond presently includes:

- Conducting environmental studies and preparing environmental documents, as described below:
- Constructing a temporary lift station and forced main to transfer the liquid contents of the pond to an adjacent sewage pond. The county is currently in negotiations with the owner of the adjacent pond to use the excess capacity in their pond during repair operations;
- Allowing the sludge in the pond to dry, or transferring the sludge to the county material site on Tecopa Hot Springs Road if the BLM approves of using the material site for this purpose;
- Reconstructing or repairing the pond embankment as recommended by the project engineer;
- Constructing an additional embankment in the center of the pond that will divide the pond in half, creating an additional pond that can be used to accept sewage while the other pond is cleaned;
- Lining the interior face of the embankment with a high-density polyethylene (HDPE) liner to reduce seepage and protect against rodent burrowing.

The construction and repair costs for this project is estimated at \$900,000 to \$1,000,000. The project will take roughly 9-months to complete and it is estimated to create or maintain 21 full-time jobs directly or indirectly related to the project. It is not know if the job positions will be retained following project construction.

EXHIBIT C

1. AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT-EXPAND BROADBAND IN RURAL AREAS – OWENS VALLEY BACKBONE

(a) Project Readiness:

A broadband inventory for the region and a feasibility study has been completed.

(b) Potential for Near-Term Jobs Creation:

60 Contractors for route construction
36 Engineers/Surveyors
12 Electricians
6 Managers
8 Administrative Personnel
122 Total

(c) Potential for Long-Term Regional Economic Benefits:

High speed broadband provides infrastructure necessary for electronic commerce and telemedicine both catalysts for economic growth in this rural under and non-served area.

(d) Environmental Stewardship:

(e) Potential Regulatory Efficiencies:

The proposed infrastructure is designed as Open Access, potentially streamlining distribution of service.

2. AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT-EXPAND BROADBAND IN RURAL AREAS – SOUTH COUNTY BACKBONE

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(a) Project Readiness:

A broadband inventory for the region and a feasibility study has been completed.

(b) Potential for Near-Term Jobs Creation:

10 Contractors for route construction
2 Engineers/Surveyors
2 Electricians
1 Manager
2 Administrative Personnel
17 Total

(c) Potential for Long-Term Regional Economic Benefits:

High speed broadband provides infrastructure necessary for electronic commerce and telemedicine both catalysts for economic growth in this rural under and non-served area.

(d) Environmental Stewardship:

(e) Potential Regulatory Efficiencies:

The proposed infrastructure is designed as Open Access, potentially streamlining distribution of service.